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1 Claims

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3 1. A method of messaging comprising the steps of:

4 - maintaining a database of records, each record
5 comprising attributes of an individual and an
6 identifier of said individual;7 - receiving at least one input attribute from a
8 user;9 - retrieving at least one record from the database
10 in accordance with at least one input attribute;11 - identifying an individual corresponding to each
12 selected record;13 - rendering at least one avatar using attributes
14 comprised in the at least one selected record;

15 - selecting a rendered avatar;

16 - sending a message to the identified individual.

17

18 2. A method as claimed in Claim 1 comprising the
19 additional step of rendering an avatar in response
20 to the input attributes.

21

22 3. A method of messaging comprising the steps pf:

23 - maintaining a database of records, each record
24 comprising attributes of an individual and an
25 identifier of said individual;26 - receiving at least one input attribute from a
27 user;28 - rendering an avatar responsive to the input
29 attributes;30 - retrieving at least one record from the database
31 in accordance with at least one input attribute;

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- 1 - identifying an individual corresponding to each
- 2 retrieved record;
- 3 - sending a message to the identified individual.
- 4
- 5 4. The method as claimed in Claim 3 comprising the
- 6 additional step of rendering at least one avatar
- 7 using attributes comprised in the selected records.
- 8
- 9 5. The method as claimed in Claim 4 comprising the
- 10 additional step of selecting at least one of the
- 11 rendered avatars.
- 12
- 13 6. The method as claimed in Claim 1 or Claim 5, wherein
- 14 the step of selecting at least one of the rendered
- 15 avatars is in response to a selection input by the
- 16 user.
- 17
- 18 7. The method as claimed in any preceding Claim
- 19 comprising the additional step of receiving the
- 20 message from the user.
- 21
- 22 8. The method as claimed in any preceding Claim
- 23 comprising the additional step of verifying that a
- 24 status of a user is such that the user is not
- 25 blocked from sending a message to an identified
- 26 individual.
- 27
- 28 9. The method as claimed in any preceding Claim
- 29 comprising the additional step of determining
- 30 whether a user has been assigned a status of
- 31 disallowed sender to an identified individual, and
- 32 preventing the rendering of an avatar corresponding
- 33 to that identified individual.

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- 1
- 2 10. The method as claimed in Claim 8 or Claim 9 wherein
- 3 the step of determining a status of the user is
- 4 dependent on the identity of the user and the
- 5 identity of the individual.
- 6
- 7 11. The method as claimed in Claim 9 or Claim 10 wherein
- 8 the status of the individual is determined using the
- 9 database.
- 10
- 11 12. The method as claimed in Claim 9 or Claim 10
- 12 comprising the steps of storing an identifier
- 13 associated with a selected record, and determining
- 14 the status of the individual using the associated
- 15 identifier.
- 16
- 17 13. The method as claimed in any preceding Claim wherein
- 18 the input attributes comprise attributes relating to
- 19 a location of an individual.
- 20
- 21 14. A system for messaging comprising:
- 22 - a storage means for storing a plurality of
- 23 records, each record comprising attributes of an
- 24 individual and an identifier of said individual;
- 25 - an avatar rendering and selection means for
- 26 rendering an avatar using attributes stored in the
- 27 storage means, and selecting a rendered avatar;
- 28 and
- 29 - a messaging means, for identifying an individual
- 30 corresponding to the selected rendered avatar, and
- 31 sending a message to the identified individual.
- 32

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- 1 15. The system as claimed in Claim 14 further comprising
2 a display for displaying a rendered avatar to the
3 user.
4
- 5 16. The system as claimed in Claim 14 or Claim 15
6 wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is
7 adapted to receive attributes input by a user for
8 matching and retrieving data in the storage means
9 and render an avatar responsive to said input
10 attributes.
11
- 12 17. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 16
13 wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is
14 adapted to match input attributes with records in
15 the database and retrieve matched records.
16
- 17 18. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 17
18 wherein the input attributes relate to the location
19 of an individual.
20
- 21 19. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 18
22 wherein the input attributes include details of an
23 individual's physical appearance.
24
- 25 20. The system as claimed in Claim 19 wherein the
26 details of the individual's physical appearance are
27 selected from a list of head shapes, eye colours,
28 eyelid states, mouth types, hairstyles, hair
29 colours, skin colours, breast size, belly size and
30 clothing.
31
- 32 21. The system as claimed in Claim 20 wherein the
33 clothing is selected from a list comprising: top

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1 style, top colour, bottom style, bottom colour, shoe
2 type and shoe colour.

3

4 22. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 21
5 wherein the attributes of an individual include
6 details of the individual's behaviour.

7

8 23. The system as claimed in Claim 22 wherein the
9 details of the individual's behaviour are selected
10 from a list comprising: smoking preference, drink
11 preference, musical preference, and interests.

12

13 24. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 23
14 wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is
15 further adapted to verify that a status of a user is
16 such that the user is not blocked from sending a
17 message to an identified individual.

18

19 25. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 23
20 wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is
21 further adapted to determine whether a user has been
22 assigned a status of disallowed sender to an
23 identified individual, and prevent the rendering of
24 an avatar corresponding to that identified
25 individual.

26

27 26. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 25
28 wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is
29 further adapted to determine the status of the
30 individual using the database.

31

32 27. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 26
33 wherein the avatar rendering and selection means is

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- 1 adapted to store an identifier associated with a
2 selected record, and the status of the individual is
3 determined using the associated identifier.
4
- 5 28. The system as claimed in any of Claims 14 to 27
6 wherein the inputting of attributes is performed
7 using a graphical user interface that includes an
8 output rendered avatar.
9
- 10 29. A method of capturing attributes of individuals
11 comprising the steps of:
12 - maintaining a database of records, each record
13 comprising attributes of an individual and an
14 identifier of an individual;
15 - receiving at least one input attribute from a
16 user;
17 - rendering an avatar, responsive to said input
18 attributes.
19
- 20 30. The method as claimed in Claim 29, further
21 comprising the step of storing the input attributes
22 in the database.
23
- 24 31. The method as claimed in Claim 29 or Claim 30,
25 further comprising the steps of determining an
26 identifier of the individual and storing the
27 identifier in the database.
28
- 29 32. A system for capturing attributes of individuals
30 comprising:

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- 1 - a storage means for storing a plurality of
2 records, each record comprising attributes of an
3 individual and an identifier of said individual;
4 - a character engine means for receiving input
5 attributes of an individual and rendering an
6 avatar, responsive to said input attributes.
7
- 8 33. The system as claimed in Claim 32 wherein the
9 character engine means is adapted to store the input
10 attributes in the database.
11
- 12 34. The system as claimed in Claim 32 or Claim 33
13 further comprising a registration means for
14 determining an identifier of the individual and
15 storing the identifier in the database.
16
- 17 35. A method of selecting individuals comprising the
18 steps of:
19 - maintaining a database of records, each record
20 comprising attributes of an individual and an
21 identifier of said individual;
22 - receiving at least one input attribute from a
23 user;
24 - retrieving at least one record from the database
25 in accordance with at least one input attribute;
26 - rendering at least one avatar using attributes
27 comprised in the at least one selected record;
28 - selecting a rendered avatar.
29
- 30 36. The method as claimed in Claim 35 comprising the
31 additional step of rendering an avatar in response
32 to the input attributes.

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- 1 37. The method as claimed in Claim 35 or Claim 36
2 wherein the input attributes relate to the location
3 of a user.
4
- 5 38. A system of selecting individuals comprising:
6 - a storage means for storing a plurality of
7 records, each record comprising attributes of an
8 individual and an identifier of said individual;
9 - an avatar rendering and selection means for
10 rendering an avatar using attributes stored in the
11 storage means, and selecting a rendered avatar.
12
- 13 39. The system as claimed in Claim 38 further comprising
14 a character engine means for inputting attributes of
15 an individual and rendering an avatar responsive to
16 said attributes is adapted to input attributes for
17 selecting data in the storage means.
18
- 19 40. The system as claimed in Claim 38 or Claim 39
20 wherein the input attributes relate to the location
21 of an individual.
22
- 23 41. The system as claimed in any of Claims 38 to 40
24 wherein the input attributes include details of an
25 individual's physical appearance.
26
- 27 42. The system as claimed in Claim 41 wherein the
28 details of the individual's physical appearance are
29 selected from a list of head shapes, eye colours,
30 eyelid states, mouth types, hairstyles, hair
31 colours, skin colours, breast size, belly size and
32 clothing.
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- 1 43. The system as claimed in Claim 42 wherein the
2 clothing is selected from a list comprising: top
3 style, top colour, bottom style, bottom colour, shoe
4 type and shoe colour.
5
- 6 44. The system as claimed in any of Claims 38 to 43
7 wherein the attributes of an individual include
8 details of the individual's behaviour.
9
- 10 45. The system as claimed in Claim 44 wherein the
11 details of the individual's behaviour are selected
12 from a list comprising: smoking preference, drink
13 preference, musical preference, and interests.
14
- 15 46. The system as claimed in any of Claims 38 to 45
16 wherein the inputting of attributes is performed
17 using a graphical user interface that includes an
18 output rendered avatar.